

MADISON COUNTY LEPC MEETING
Oct 18, 2007 Meeting notes

Attendance:

Shawn Christensen, MVRFD
Steve Orr, MCSO
Melinda Tichenor, Madison Valley Hospital & CCC
Scott McClintic, MVRFD
Chris Orr, RVS&R, CERT, VCFD
Jane Yecny, RVAS, RVH, RVSAR
Ken Yecny, RVSAR, RVAS
Fred Wilson, MSAR
Steve DiGiovanna, MC Communications
Wayne Redfield, Citizen Corps Council
Jill Steeley, MCPHD
Julie Johnson, MHC

Chairman Wayne Redfield called the meeting of the Madison County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) to order at 7:05 PM at the Madison County Courthouse.

Jill moved to accept the minutes from the September 20, 2007 meeting. Fred seconded the motion, all voted aye and the motion carried.

Resolution of Pending Organizational Matters:

Voting in of a vice chairman - Motion made by Steve O, seconded by Jill and all in favor of Scott McClintic being the vice chair.

LEPC: Being new to the chairman position Wayne has nothing to report on at this time

CCC:

Melinda reported on the following from the October 11th meeting:

The Ennis storage unit rent is \$385 for the months that we have had to store the CERT training material. We will move all the items to the Alder county property by December 1st. Chris will talk with the county bookkeeper to assure that the funds raised by grants and fundraisers will remain in the account for the Citizen Corps Council and not rolled over to the county general fund.

8 people attended the recent CERT training in Virginia City 2 from Jefferson County 4 from Virginia City and 2 from Twin Bridges.

There will be a radio training in Ennis on October 25th at 7:00 pm in the Ennis Fire hall.

A comparison of the 72 hour kits brought was discussed. Everyone will be encouraged to continue to bring their kits to future meetings to share ideas for contents.

There is a "Train the Trainer" class about mapping your neighborhood in Helena Nov. 6th and Billings Nov. 7th. Chris and Steve will attend.

Chris reported on the new/used command vehicle that is being purchased from Kalispell.

Jill met with the administration of the Twin Bridges School to discuss the activities for their emergency preparedness grant. Ideas of getting the CERT program into the school were discussed and will be suggested to the administration for further refinement or other suggestions. There are several flu clinics scheduled in the Ruby Valley area.

Next meeting will be in Ennis November 8th in the Hospital Boardroom

Steve Orr, Deputy IC of the Sheridan Water Main Break would like to thank the CERT team for the response of information distribution in to the residence of Sheridan after the water main break.

A discussion was held about the incident and procedures that could be improved upon, such as: when would it be possible to have the ICP or the Operations chief in a shelter with a few amenities; to use the reverse 911 system when up and running; to have CERT make calls from their homes to residences of an area; how the individual town's officials react to emergencies of this kind. Maybe an after action meeting would be good to discuss these things. Steve D will talk to Chris about organizing a meeting.

Emergency Management Director Report: See attached report

**Director, Emergency Management
Report to LEPC
(18 Oct, 2007)**

Actions: Ordered 2 pallets of Fire foam, 32 pails to a pallet, one pallet will be placed in Alder Fire Dept and one in Madison Valley FD. The fire departments upon appropriating pails for their district will then contact DEM to inform on the amount so they can be properly billed and supplies monitored.

As of 3 October, 2007, all fire restrictions have been lifted by the department for State and Madison County private lands.

October 9th, Steve DiGiovanna, Jill Steeley, Steve Orr and I reported to the Commissioners on the Incident Management Team (IMT). The commissioners after hearing our suggestions on this matter approved the formation of the IMT. This is a dynamic project and will require monthly meetings of the core group (aforementioned individuals listed above.)

Projects: The petitions for VC and Alder Fire Districts have been sent out. VC has returned their in town individuals petition, and I am currently receiving the out of town petitions piece meal. A tally of the petitions will take place in the near future and proceed from there. Alder is still currently going door-to-door. The formation looks favorable.

Through the help of Shawn Christensen, Madison County DES has purchased a mobile cascade unit which will double as a mobile command center. It is a 1976 van, fully functional as a command unit and cascade unit. This unit will be kept at the MVRFD, an inter-local agreement will be circulated to the County Fire Departments in Madison County stating that the vehicle is for all FD use and the unit will respond to all hazards when requested by the jurisdictional department..

Future Plans: Along with the recently acquired MCU/ Cascade Unit, it is this departments plan to acquire two trailers to be outfitted as Mobile Command Units, one for each side of the county. This will be included in my 5 year plan.

IMT: (Incident management team) is being formed. To start it consists of Chris, Jill, Steve D, and Steve O, They have talked with the commissioners and have received the go a head with the formation of the rest of the team. This team will be available to manage an incident and all will have cross training to fill the initial ICS chief postions.

Communications Coordinator Report:

Steve reported on the following:

Madison County

Communications Department

October 2007

"Some of the world's greatest feats were accomplished by people not smart enough to know they were impossible."

Madison County Board of Commissioners initiates a new Communications Department

The Madison County Board of Commissioners approved the development of a new Communications department in Madison County.

The Madison County Communications departments administrative/management duties include: management and supervision of the county E-911 system and the interface with the Public Safety Answering Point, implementation of plans and strategies, supervision of the departments activities, including but not limited to - management and coordination of planning, operations and enhancement of communications activities -including all communications activities supporting public safety and public service responsibilities in the county.

The communication department is headed by the Communications Coordinator who answers directly to the Board of Commissioners.

A one month cross over / transition period preceded the formal handover of the county department from retiring Independent Consulting CEO Frank Ford - to the new Madison County Communications Department Coordinator Steve DiGiovanna - on October 1st 2007.

Prior to the development of this new department, E-911 and county wireless communications were headed by the Sheriff Office.

The new communications department head will work collaboratively and in close conjunction with the Sheriff's office and the Department of Emergency Service (DES). The Coordinator and the Sheriff will work closely together to facilitate continued effective communication services and operational functions regarding county E-911 wireless and general county communication activities.

"Nothing can stop the person with right mental attitude from achieving a goal - but nothing on earth can help the person with the wrong mental attitude achieve anything productive whatsoever"

Frank Ford Retires - for now

Frank Ford, the CEO of Independent Consulting and former DES and communications consultant for Madison County, is planning on retiring as of October 1st, 2007. Not one to be idle for long, his immediate plans include a relaxing few months traveling to warmer climates and visiting friends and family with his wife Beverly.

After that, a plan to continue building a new home / mini-ranch in the mountains above Sheridan is high on the "to do" list. Frank has been instrumental in the modernizing of the DES department and the development of the new Communications department. He is also a key player in the implementation and formulation of many new/revised county operational plans and emergency protocols.

His influential work with Interoperability Montana and the establishment of the South Central Interoperability Consortium (SCMIC) have been monumental in helping Montana's rural counties to establish a foothold of influence in the states new and ambitious plans for microwave modernization.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPT. MISSION STATEMENT

“providing quality, professional customer service to the public and the five primary county service branches”

1. ***Law Enforcement***
2. ***Fire***
3. ***EMS***
4. ***Public Works***
5. ***Administration and Communications Center***

Did you know ???

- Madison County Communications Officers average approximately **2752** telephone interactions per month (**688 per week**) or about **33,000** phone interactions each year !
- Madison County Communications Officers average approximately **972** radio interactions per week (**3888 per month**) or approximately **46,656** radio interactions per year !

“Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work.”

Communications Dept. — what are we up to ???

The Communications Department is charged with many aspects of communications related activities. Some of the immediate items we are currently working on include:
The establishment of a 7 person E-911 committee as recommended by the state Public Safety Service Bureau (PSSB).

Sustain the momentum and the work with South Central Montana Interoperability Consortium (SCMIC) and Interoperability Montana (IM) program.

Implement a new Point to Point (Microwave PTP) enhanced and reliable communication connection with the VC Hill repeater and the courthouse.

Investigate the purchase options of a new voice recording system in the Sheriff's Office (Stancil vs NICE vs others?).

Develop an updated and modern Policy and Procedure manual specifically designed for the Dispatch / Communications department-relative to operational direction and litigation considerations for the department, the county, the individual Communications officers and their responsibilities.

A monthly newsletter to keep Communication Officers and fellow county departments and employees informed and aware.

Communications Center business cards so Communication Officers have a professional means to issue Sheriff's / Communications Center information upon requests by walk up customers.

Evaluate the purchase of television news and Weather coverage options in the Primary EOC / dispatch center.

Re-evaluation of county EMS and Fire dispatch response protocols for local fire and EMS agencies.

Initiate 911 recall notification system / training by 11/07.

Communications Officers make the difference

I am constantly impressed with the caliber and ability of our Madison County Communications Officers.

Their professionalism and service capacity - while being tasked with the single handed responsibility of all aspects of county communications - are very impressive indeed.

Our Communications center supplies communications and dispatch service for **7** different fire departments, **4** QRU agencies, **2** large ambulance districts, **5** Law Enforcement agencies including: the Madison County Sheriffs Office, the Ennis Police department, local Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks officers, BLM Federal Officers and local Montana Highway Patrol officers.

Additionally, our Communication Officers also interact and monitor radio communications with road crews, school buses / districts, various county administrative employees, DES and 4 other surrounding counties.

The Communications Center is headed by lifelong county resident and Communications Supervisor Janet Fortner—with 34 years experience in the Sheriff's office dispatch center.

Janet was instrumental in bringing Madison County into "Full Compliance" during our last state audit in 2005. Very few county agencies across the state obtain a "full compliance" rating - and the hard work and attention to detail are a credit to Janet's dedicated service.

Additional full time Communication Officers include Vicki Selvidge with 28 years service, Casey Baril - nearly 20 years of service and Heather Woirhaye with 9 years of service to the department. These four individuals alone bring a combined total of 91+ years of experience and service to our center.

Part time employees include: Junie Miles with 1 year part time experience, Tommy Lukshaw who is currently completing training and started July 24th of this year.

Additionally, Steve DiGiovanna and Detention Officer Carmin Hill fill in as Communication Officers on an "as needed / when possible" basis.

All of our full and part time communication officers have graduated from the Montana State Communication Officer Academy in Helena - and have been certified by the State of Montana as PSAP Communication Officers. In addition, all PSAP operators attend a 6 week "in house" training process with Communication Supervisor Janet Fortner.

Is our BUZZ finally gone?

That low buzz / hiss "open mic" problem coming across the local radio frequency the past few months may finally be gone for good - thank you very much!

Apparently, the Upper Ruby Repeater was struck by lightning and damaged sometime in July during one of our frequent summer electrical storms.

This caused a situation where the repeater transmitter locked open and wreaked havoc with our local radio channels and direct radio communication operations.

"We even got complaints from citizens who said they could no longer listen to their scanners because of the constant radio noise" according to one county communications officer.

Essentially, the radio repeater appeared to be in constant transmit mode - according to Jeff Tong of Bridger Communication Services.

After many weeks of hunting the cause of the transmission - including the activation of

signal hunting aircraft, the culprit was identified.

"What threw us off was that we de-activated the Upper Ruby Repeater several times electronically - and the signal persisted. This caused us to look at other transmission sources - not realizing the repeater de-activate function was not working as well" according to Jeff Tong. "We wasted a lot of time looking in the wrong direction - and we learned a big lesson" Tong said.

Bridger Communication will be coming to Madison County to reprogram all responder radios to match new frequencies that will be in use by the county. All units will be responsible to get there radios to Steve to have this done. He will inform everyone of the date in early 2008. This will include mobile, base stations, and hand held radios.

Steve mentioned the need for an alternative dispatch site that would have landline phone capabilities to be able to use the 911 system.

Old business:

False Alarms:

Jane asked where we were with the proposed ordinance for the false alarm. Steve D brought up some clarification that will need to be determined as to when a response is considered to have been made. ie. when the page goes out, when the responders get to the building, when the units start rolling, or when the unit arrives at the site of the alarm. This should be spelled out in the ordinance. Jill will check with Chris to see if the ordinance has returned from the county attorney yet.

New Business:

Report from Shawn on the new Mobile command unit as a 16ft 1976 white and red utility van is being purchased from the Fire Department in Kalispell for \$3500. It will have an O2 cascade to fill SBA units on scene, outside lighting, a generator, 5 seats inside, wiring for radio and computer communications, tables and many other things needed in a mobile command unit.

Julie Johnson reported on the FEMA Grant training course she attended. There are several grant opportunities for Pre-application, Planning, Projects or Management of projects related to a variety of life safety issues available through FEMA. She gave the committee an abundance of information and Jill will pass the information on to Barbie Durham for her to possibly apply for some of the grants for the county. Julie would work with Barbie in the process of filling out the grant forms on line if she wanted the help.

Schedule Next Meeting:

The next LEPC meeting was set for 7:00 PM. on Thursday, November, 15, 2007.

With no further business, Wayne Redfield adjourned the meeting at 8:25 PM.

Notes prepared by: Melinda Tichenor, CCC and Madison Valley Hospital